

# LIMERICK SOCIALIST

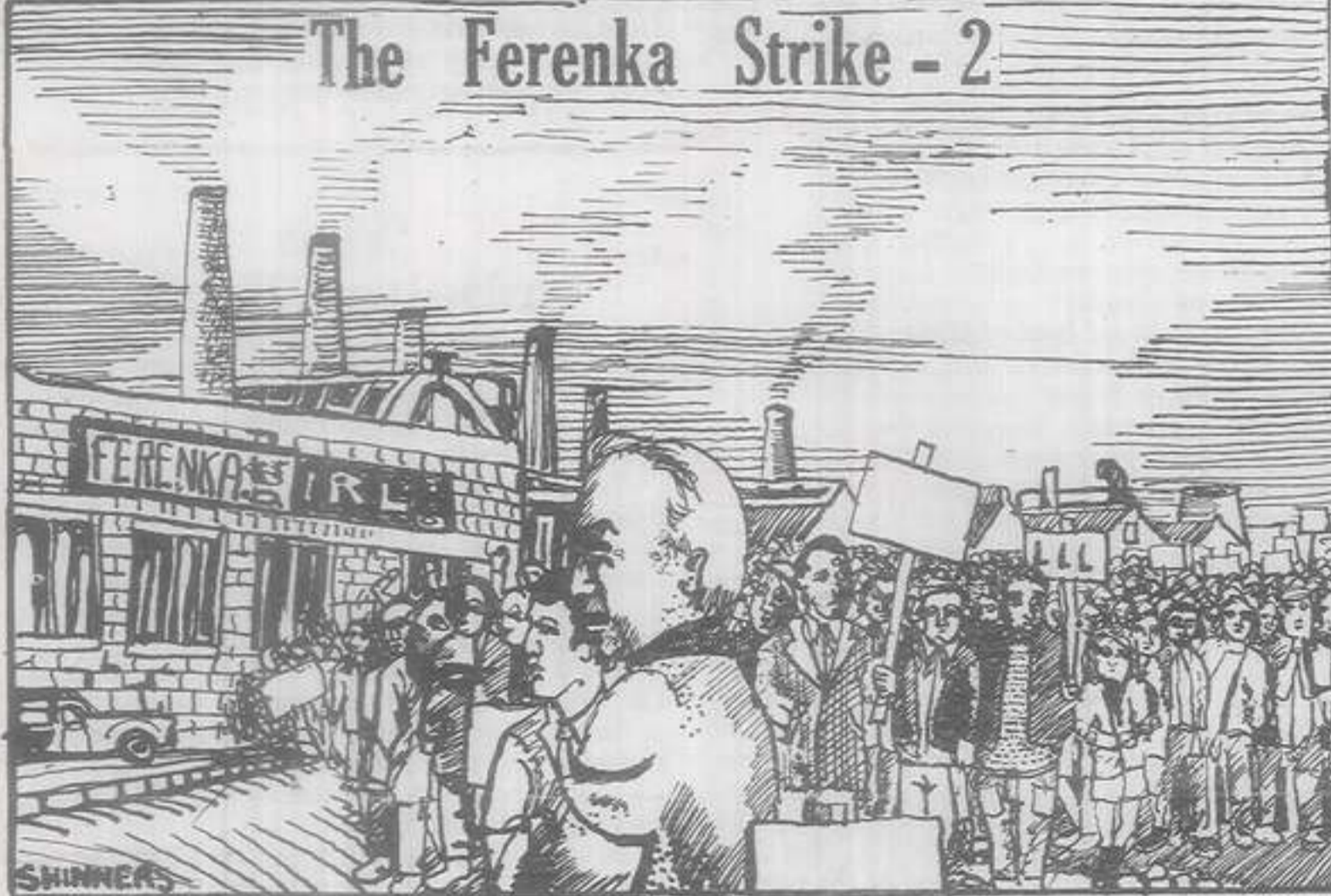
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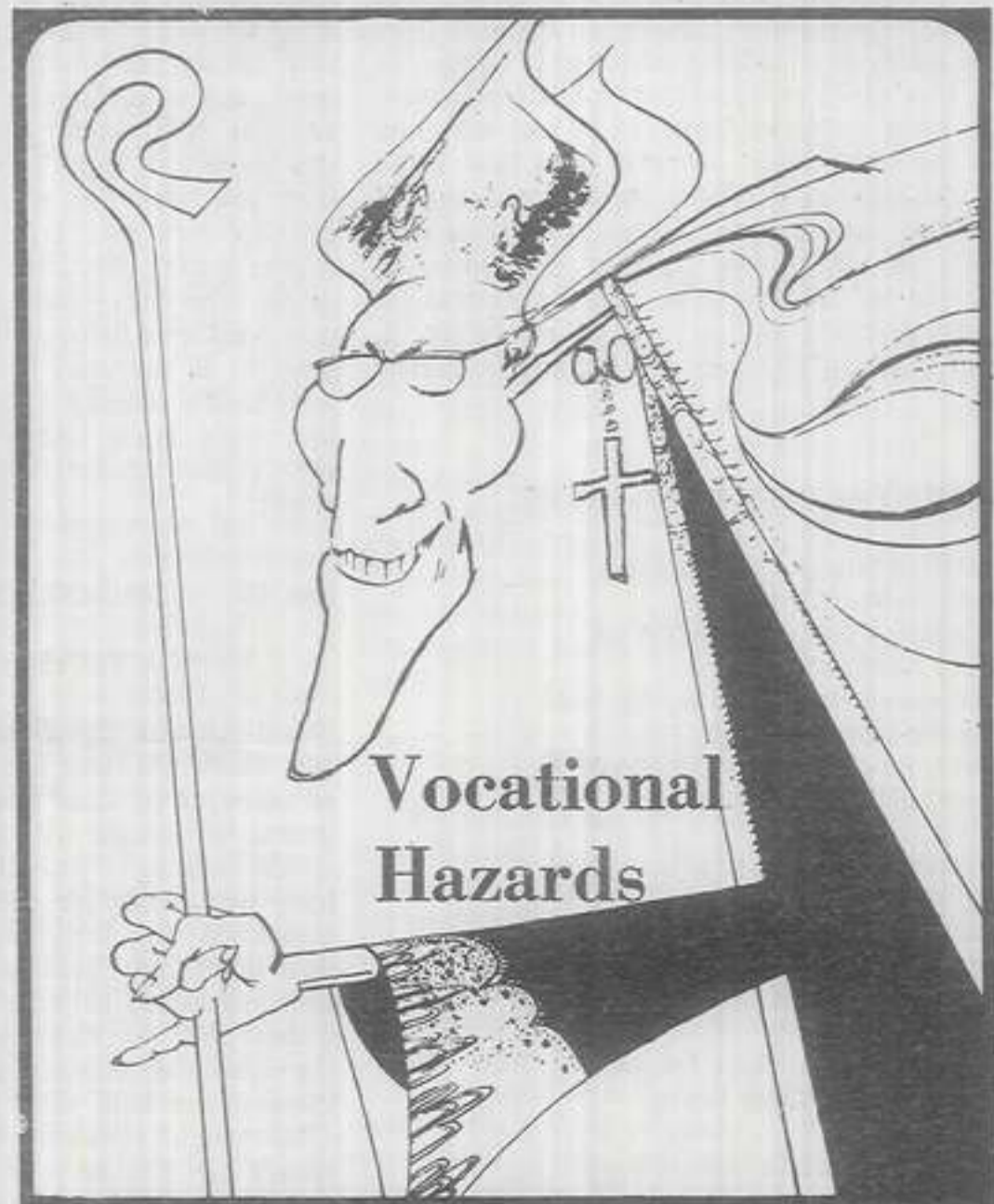
'That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic ...' James Connolly



## THE UNBELTED EARLS



## The Thoughts of Paddy Devlin



ECHOES FROM

— THE —

# BOTTOM DOG

"We must look at life in all its aspects from the point of view of the  
"Bottom Dog"—the oppressed—be it nation, class, or sex."

## THE BOTTOM DOG.

NO. 9 15th DECEMBER, 1917 PRICE ½d

### HOUSING FACTS AND FIGURES

We offer our thanks to the B.D. who has sent us a copy of Dr. McGrath's Report. (In passing we may say that we are not yet on the Corporation franchise list). The Report is a bit dry, but instructive at the same time. Our space is restricted and we cannot devote all we would wish to it. To begin with, we learn that the density is 16.1 per acre, not bad when taken as a whole, but against that we have the number of tenements placed at 1,005 comprising upwards of ten, eleven and twelve persons living, eating and sleeping in one room; 1,812 houses unfit for human habitation, of which 852 should be closed, 82 can be put in repair, 635 are, in this year of applied science, without a W.C. This is not a very rosy state of affairs. It mostly concerns the B.D.'s, but how is it to be remedied when the top dogs who reside in O'Connell Street are brought to book for still continuing to use ash-pits, "those relics of mediaeval times", to quote the words of the Report. "They must share with the denizens of the laneways the mighty responsibility of helping to keep Limerick in an insanitary condition by refusing to abandon their primitive methods of dealing with highly dangerous refuse". Out of 75 prosecutions to abate nuisances only 51 were convicted and £14.1s was the total value of the harm done — roughly 5/- a case. Little wonder the local elite on the Bench could not see their way to impose more. Justice is satisfied with 5/-, and the B.D. has to grin and bear it! Prosecutions for unwholesome food are given at 16. How many instances do we know? Convictions 15, and fines imposed £6.0s6d, for helping to poison people ...

### THERE MUST BE SOMETHING WRONG.

*When earth produces free and fair,  
The golden waving corn;  
When fragrant fruits perfume the air,  
And fleecy flocks are shorn;  
While thousands move with aching head,  
And sing the ceaseless song—  
"We starve, we die; oh, give us bread!"  
There must be something wrong.*

*What wealth is wrought, as seasons roll,  
From off the fruitful soil;  
When luxury from pole to pole,  
Reaps fruit of human toil;  
When from a thousand, one alone  
In plenty rolls along,  
And others ne'er a joy have known,  
There must be something wrong.*

*When poor men's tables waste away  
To barrenness and drought,  
There must be something in the way  
That's worth the finding out.*

*When surfeit on table bends,  
And numbers move along,  
When scarce a crust their board extends,  
There must be something wrong.*

*Then let the law give equal right  
To wealthy and to poor;  
Let Freedom crush the hand of Might,  
We ask for nothing more.  
Until this system is begun,  
The burden of my song,  
It must and can be only one —  
There must be something wrong.*

NO. 12 29th DECEMBER, 1917 Price ½d.

### TIMBER MEN

It is hardly believable that able-bodied men work for 20/- a week, but if what we hear is true such is the case in Limerick. We learn on good authority that McMahan's, the timber people, pay their men only 20/- a week, 2/- of which is war bonus. The men are engaged in carrying deals etc. This 20/- would not buy them sufficient food at the present time to keep them in a state of physical efficiency, when we are informed in British Parliament that to buy merely the ration allowance of bread, flour, meat, and sugar for one week for a man, his wife and one child would cost 25/-. All we must say is the McMahans must have timber consciences when they pay such low wages. The tale they tell to a country man who grumbles at the price of their timber is that they have to pay their men very high wages. The firm makes munition boxes. They had men employed painting them but now they have got boys to do the work for 6/- a week each. The 20/- men have a remedy if they only apply it. Let them join their Trade Union and in co-operation with their fellow workers secure something like a living wage.

NO. 13 12th JANUARY, 1918. Price ½d.

### A TECHNICAL MATTER

When the late Mr. Lee died about twelve months ago, Messrs Harrison Lee brought down from Newry as manager of their Foundry a Mr. McCowen. Of course he brought with him new ideas of his own as to the running of such an establishment. He was not long here when he became a best friend of Mr. Comerton, the Principal of the Technical School. And when they became friends, it was but natural that one would help the other, so lo and behold, in a short time Mr. McCowen was conducting a class at the Technical School. Rumours went around and an inquiry was held with Mr. Callox O'Callaghan as Chairman, at which it was stated that McCowen got charge of a class and was paid without being appointed by the Committee. We are anxiously looking forward to what the Auditor will say to this when he audits the Technical School Accounts, or is

it that these trifling matters trouble him not at all. This is Part 1. Part 2, follows. Mr. Carr, President of the Engineers' Society, is one of the Trades' Council representatives on the Technical Committee, and naturally he took a keen interest in the affair and in a business-like way wanted to get at the bottom of the whole thing. But unfortunately for Mr. Carr, he happens to be working at Harrison Lee's and is, therefore, under the thumb of McCowen, with the result that McCowen revenged himself on Mr. Carr by giving him notice of dismissal; the plea being an insufficiency of work. He also gave notice to Mr. John Hall of Shannon Rowing Club fame. We sympathise with Messrs Carr and Hall, but we are forced to ask what are the other members of the Engineers' Society at Harrison Lee's going to do about these two victimised members?

## The Unbelted Earls

"The quality of mercy is not strained", wrote Shakespere, but when applied to Limerick politics it could read: "The quality of merriment is sometimes strained at City Council meetings".

The custodians of local democracy are convinced believers in the old adage about "all work and no play ...". And so some of the more practised Council performers invariably manage to slip in a few moments of buffoonery and clowning into the most serious local government debate.

But it came as a surprise to many people to see Cllr. Mickey Earls entering into the fun and games at the last City Council meeting in June. A detailed blueprint on the future development of Limerick was placed before the Council by a special planning consultant, Mr. Hartley.

But the planning expert was no match for the wily Mickey when it came to discussing the new programme. The Ballynanty Councillor quickly threw Mr. Hartley into total confusion by cleverly posing a question about an area outside the consultant's plan. Soon the whole Council erupted in laughter as Mickey led the expert up every garden path between Arthur's Quay and the Docks.

But far and away the highlight of the night was the vote of sympathy proposed by Earls to the family of the late Tadgh Smalle. "He was a particular and personal friend of mine", declared Mickey. "He spent many a long day following me around the streets of Limerick when I was "mooching" from the "One-Day-Week" School".

Even Mr. Hartley and his new plan couldn't follow that!



### ONE GOOD TURN-ER

FOR THE ATTENTION OF JIM TURNER,  
FITZGERALD, COTTAGES, ROSBRIEN:

"Another Redemptorist brother runs a truck and specialises in repairing houses for people who cannot afford to renovate their dwellings"  
(Catholic Standard, June 1st, 1973).

### HELD OVER

Part four of the series In Search of ... John Francis O'Donnell has been held over until next month.

# INCOME TAX

by JOHN BOYLE

It is remarkable that until comparatively recently the Irish trade union movement has been so reluctant to give the leadership that it is elected to do in a matter which is of the most vital concern to the bulk of its members – that is, the glaring inequalities of the entire system of income taxation.

Increasing pressure has, however, begun to emerge in the past couple of years – most obviously with the emergence of a body dedicated to ease the tax burden on the vast body of workers compelled to operate under the PAYE system the National Income Tax Relief Organisation (NITRO). Such evidence of grass roots concern has undoubtedly pushed the I.C.T.U. into making its recent demands in this area.

Whilst the reaction from the groups representing the farmers, the NFA and the ICMSA, has focussed attention on the single demand calling for the extension of the taxation net so as to take in the farming section, it should not be lost sight of that it is fundamentally more important for the trade union movement to stress that the present method of PAYE assessment is what is at the heart of workers' discontent with the system. Workers feel – and quite rightly so – that an excessive burden of tax is being placed on their shoulders due to the manner in which PAYE operates.

This is not to state that it is not in the workers' best interests to demand that farmers be taxed – it certainly is – but merely to point out that simply by dragging the farmers into the tax system will in no way necessarily, and most likely not at all, benefit the lot of the ordinary PAYE worker. Monies collected from the farmers in taxation will doubtless be used to improve the infrastructure (e.g. better roads, transport and communications systems) for the particular benefit of the capitalist class.

In one of its early issues Creation's latest publication, the "Sunday World" had a splash front page story which, under the heading TAX SHAME purported to show that the taxman comes down harder on the Dublin worker than on the employer. It is of course true that this is the case, but unfortunately the story which attempted to demonstrate it was skimpy and imprecise – indeed, a perfect target for any employer anxious to show that the "Sunday World" didn't know what it was talking about.

Before going further, it is worth noting how the taxation system operates. For anybody employed by an employer registered with the income tax people, the PAYE system will apply. In this case yearly returns of income are issued and are meant to be completed by each employee. On the basis of this return, a Certificate of Tax Free Allowances is issued. This certificate entitles the employer to deduct tax on any earnings over and above the amount of a person's TFA (for a single person the TFA is a little over £8 per week, and for a married man it is £13 and upwards, depending generally on the number of children).

The important points to note are (i) that the employer is empowered to deduct the tax and (ii) that the tax is deducted at source – the worker is taxed on every penny he earns, the system is almost completely watertight.

Compare this with the system that operates for professional people (doctors, solicitors, etc.), and for business concerns of every description. Here the person or company is assessed on the basis of the returns furnished by the person or company. In

other words, these privileged classes are allowed the luxury of declaring their own profits or losses, as they think fit! The tax people simply accept their version of it! Many people and companies in this category also avail of the services of accountants and tax specialists of one sort or another – whose primary function is to "cook" their clients' books in a manner which will leave them liable to as little or no taxation as can 'reasonably' be got away with.

These people trade on the very fair assumption that the Revenue Commissioners are understaffed and, as a consequence, procrastination, evasion, and waffle is often sufficient to get the tax officials to accept compromise settlements which in nearly all cases are to the advantage of their clients. A story carried in the Sunday Press on the 20th April purported to show that a drive against professional people was being mounted in a Dublin tax district. Well, if it is, well and good – but one would need further proof of it than the inflated story which the Sunday newspaper dug up for its readers.

The timing of the story was in many respects its most interesting aspect. It followed Richie Ryan's first budget by a matter of four days – a budget in the course of which Ryan announced some stiffer measures against professional people in such matters as business expenditure on entertainment, car allowances, and so on. After a budget in which the VAT rate on a whole range of commodities in widespread use – such as fuel, clothes, footwear, books, newspapers, alcohol, tobacco, petrol, etc – had been increased, which is to be allegedly offset by the removal of VAT from food as from Sept. 1st, it must have seemed obvious to Ryan that he had to indicate some sort of move against the wealthier sections of the community. But if it means anything at all, it's a very half-hearted step.

And of course, as one might have expected from a Fine Gael dominated Coalition in collusion with the patently anti-working class Labour Party, Fine Gael's major political allies, and the group who have by far the biggest representation of any of the professions in Dail Eireann – the farmers – are permitted again to flaunt their now very considerable wealth in the faces of the urban masses, confident in the knowledge that they remain untouched by the taxmen.

That this is a scandalous state of affairs is now even openly admitted by the more honest spokesmen on behalf of the farming sector, but it is nonetheless an object lesson to all class-conscious workers of the political power wielded by the big farmers in the so-called Republic of Ireland. This is a political power which must be broken before any attempt to tax the farmers will be mounted. In the meantime they are free to accumulate capital and/or vast holdings, and by superior methods of production, to drive the small farmer out of existence.

If and when the day comes, under the present administration, that in response to political working class pressure and hypocritical liberal outrage, some move is made on the farmers, one can be sure it will be a milk-and-water effort – one perfectly in tune with the social power basis of a society set up to serve the interests of big business and the big farmers. Needless to remark whatever tax might in time be collected from the farmers will, as was remarked earlier, in no material way benefit the lot of the workers oppressed by an unjust tax system.

A few brief statistics will underpin the gross inequalities of the system. Ignoring the less

significant sources of revenue (from the point of view of this article) as V.A.T, T.O.T etc., Customs and Excise, and estate and stamp duties, the 1972 Exchequer returns reveal the following information: Corporation Profits Tax – £21 million, an increase of 3.5%; Schedule E (PAYE) income tax – £104 million, an increase of 40%, and income tax from all other sources (one assumes from business concerns and professional people), £48 million, an increase of 14%.

Two salient facts emerge from the above statistics. (1) That the ordinary PAYE employee is carrying a totally disproportionate amount of the total taxation burden, especially in a country where 5% of the population own 70% of the wealth. (2) That the rate or percentage of income received by the wage and salary earners that goes to the taxman is increasing faster than the contributions made by the wealthy (not to mention the non-contributions of the farming section). Any real wage increases that have come the way of the wage-earner since Lemass's "revolution" have, in other words, been gobbled up by the Revenue Commissioners.

Reform of the system is the easy catchword of today. The realistic situation is that the tax system exists to perpetuate the capitalist class and the attendant social structure, and will not be reformed until that system is overthrown.

## A ROOM WITH A VIEW

For the luxury of living in one room a young married couple pay £6 per week. The fact that it is located in Limerick's North Circular Road fails to add anything to the exploitation.

One room in which to start married life. This is the harsh reality of present day Limerick. And the demand cannot be met ... all over the city, "get-rich-quick merchants" are feasting on the plight of other human beings ... who are less fortunate and forced into submission by a savage society, for merely trying to lead natural lives.

### SAME ROOM

Orange paper covers the walls and contrasts with the delicate blue of a bedspread. Across the narrow carpet the bedroom tapers into the kitchen ... the strip of carpet ends and lino takes over. The cooking and washing facilities are also in the same room ... outside leafy trees sway against the July sun. The glass panes divide up the scene like an assembled jigsaw: "You pay for the view, mate", says the young husband.

The carpet landing deadens sound ... occupants are identified by the numbers on the room doors. There are two doors on the first landing ... and another landing above ... at a conservative estimate the landlord has a £36 weekly income with little work.

### FREEDOM

"We had to pay £15 before we moved in ... we were desperate for a place ... so we paid", there is no bitterness in his voice ... maybe acceptance ... maybe disillusionment. "You know, "he manages a laugh", the landlord is from the North ... and he tells me about the treatment of Catholics up there ... " He breaks off, rubs his neck ... and then laughs ... and laughs.

To-morrow he will have to pay an extra £1 per week ... his wife is pregnant ... and landlords don't want kids ... Still, for £7 a week he has a room with a view ... and the I.R.A. would have him believe that they are fighting for freedom in the North ... No wonder he laughs ... but maybe at night he cries ...

# THE FERENKA STRIKE

(2)

An account of the Ferenka strike, which took place from the 7th to the 12th of May, appeared in the June edition of the "Limerick Socialist". The strike failed to achieve its objective and the 750 production workers returned to work without forcing any concessions from the factory bosses.

The Ferenka company is a subsidiary of the multi-national firm AKZO, and has received a grant of £11 million from the Industrial Development Authority since it set up here in July, 1971. AKZO is the ninth largest chemical company in the world and at June, 1972, employed a total of 102,200 workers, 30,700 of which were employed in the Netherlands. The AKZO company has subsidiaries and associated firms in America, Brazil, Holland, Belgium, Spain, France and Sweden. Ferenka is the firm's most important plant for the production of steelcord for tyres, although it also has a plant in West Germany which supplies the same product.

Another strike took place at an AKZO factory last year. The strike at Enka Fibres plant, the company's Dutch subsidiary, lasted as long as the Ferenka protest (from Monday to Saturday), but the end results of the two six-day strikes were totally different. An account of the Dutch strike, written at the scene of the action at Breda by John Lambert, appeared in the *Sunday Times* on September 24th, 1972. The article titled, *Dutch Sit On To Success*, stated:

AT 9 O'CLOCK yesterday morning, to cheers from the local population, 452 workers marched proudly out of the Enka Fibres plant which they had been occupying since mid-day on Monday. They had not only saved their jobs, but had also made industrial relations history in Europe for their occupation, backed by a strike in Germany, had forced multi-national giant AKZO to reverse its decision to close down plants in Germany and Belgium as well as the Breda factory. AKZO gave way although they had maintained since last April that the plants were doomed because of over capacity on the European market.

The Breda workers - 75 Belgians, 17 Spaniards, an Englishman, the rest Dutch - had won in under a week what five months of negotiating by the unions in three countries had failed to wring from AKZO. The company's decision, which threatened 5,700 of their 100,000 workers, was announced out of the blue last April, without prior talks with the unions. It represented a chance to get out of an area of the artificial fibres market where AKZO was making big losses because of the chronic over-capacity all over Europe. The news was released the day after the European Commission had fined the companies for a cartel in the sector. The unions insisted on talks, which have been going on ever since, locally, nationally and even internationally.

It was a new deadlock in the Dutch talks that sparked off the occupation, which was surely the best organised, the most peaceful - and the most successful the Continent has yet seen. A group of six shop stewards and union officials started planning it the previous Thursday night. By Sunday they had 52 key workers at a secret meeting. They went into action at 13.50 on Monday, and when the manager got back from lunch the gates were shut. A works meeting produced massive support: the mood after five months of suspense was "this can't go on".

When the news reached the ENKA-Glanzstoff plant at Barmen, near Wuppertal, on Tuesday, the 1,400 workers there acted immediately with a different formula: the shifts relayed each other

## A LESSON FROM HOLLAND

round the clock in the plant, but only two non-stop lines were kept running.

With legendary Dutch obstinacy, and the funds of the Chemical Workers Unions behind them - strike pay in Breda was £4 a day - the workers were all set for a long siege. Everything was organised to the tiniest detail. Under a strict rule, everyone had to get six hours sleep a night. All the workers under 21 had been sent home. The medical service was running. So was the telephone exchange. And there was even a local clergyman on the site. Journalists visiting the plant on Thursday had to go through strict controls.

## DISTURBING

By Wednesday night the Dutch Government was trying to mediate. With an election campaign just beginning, the last thing the Conservative coalition wanted was a conflict like this in the headlines for several weeks. On Wednesday the Breda workers' wives marched through the capital and got themselves on national TV with the slogan: "Today it's us. Tomorrow it'll be you".

The workers' position was that they would not budge without a commitment that all the threatened plants, not just the Dutch one, would be kept open. AKZO tried to play it tough, but a board meeting on Thursday changed course abruptly and gave the commitment. With disarming frankness, they said it would cost them money, but that it was worth it because all the attention Breda was getting was disturbing work in the rest of the company.

The occupiers played it cool and waited until Friday morning to hear a report from the unions, who had been with the AKZO board. Only then did they leave the plant, and production was due to start up again at the week-end.

What AKZO will do with the Breda plant, part of which is only a year old, and which can produce on its own a major part of the current surplus, is still not clear and will not be for some time. But both the Breda occupiers and the AKZO board have set precedents that are going to have a big impact all over Europe.

The strike and its effects were also considered in an article in *Chemical Age International*, in its edition of 29th September, 1972. Headed, *Enka Sit-in Forces AKZO To Reverse Decisions On Plant Closures*, it read:

The occupation, fully supported by the labour unions, was unique in Dutch history. The employees were impatient of the endless discussions concerning the reorganisation plan and wanted to show the board, the government and the Dutch people that their discontent was also directed against a society which enabled large concerns to manipulate the workers and their interests. The unions, who led the occupation, have now started discussions with AKZO in which the Dutch ministers of social and economic affairs will mediate. The occupation, carefully planned and carried out with great speed and precision, was supported by all 1,500 employees of which several hundreds locked themselves into the plant. Employees of other AKZO companies supported their colleagues in Breda ... The decision by the AKZO group not to close five plants in Holland, Germany and Belgium has resulted in strong pressure on the E.E.C. to limit investment and production capacity in polyester fibres.

AKZO was faced with overcapacity problems in the European fibre market in 1971 and this was the

reason given by the company for the threatened plant closures (Meanwhile, the company was expanding its capacity in these products in Brazil).

Since the strike ended at the Limerick factory some new developments have been initiated by the company. Two training specialists from the Dublin headquarters of AnCO have arrived at the plant to carry out a survey and to advise the factory bosses on its management and training problems. John Carroll, vice-president of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union also paid a one-day visit to the factory for discussions with shop stewards, and the bosses. Following these talks shop stewards and bosses adjourned to the *Hurlers' Pub*, where, by all accounts, a good time was had by all.

But the needs of the Ferenka workers will not be satisfied by a hooley at the *Hurlers'*. The review of wage scales and the operation of the four-cycle shifts system at present being carried out by management demands a direct and positive response from the workers. If workers' claims for industrial democracy and participation in decision making are to succeed it is essential that these claims be backed up with increased class consciousness. There is also an immediate need for the Workers' Council at Ferenka to monitor the world wide activities of AKZO, the multi-national parent company and to forge links with their fellow workers in Europe.

Before these objectives can be attained, the present divisions among the workers must be closed. The need for a united Workers' Council, made up of production workers and tradesmen, is urgent. The shortage of skilled men, especially fitters must be met in a democratic way by the workers themselves. The closed shop situation confining the employment of fitters at Ferenka to members of the National Electrical Engineering Trade Union is a further divisive influence.

The history of closed shops in modern industry in the Limerick area began in the late sixties when the Krups Engineering Ltd., company operated the first closed shop for production workers and fitters. The architects of this closed shop were Alan McCutcheon, then personnel manager of Krups, Vincent Moran, branch secretary of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union and Michael Finnan, branch president of the National Electrical Engineering Trade Union. Moran and Finnan became close friends of McCutcheon and subsequently, in October 1969, all three went on a tour of the German plants of Krups at the expense of the firm.

When Ferenka began to establish itself in Limerick in 1971, McCutcheon left Krups and was appointed personnel manager of the Ferenka factory. Soon it emerged that an identical closed shop arrangement had been imposed on the new factory, again confining employment of production workers to the membership of the I.T.G.W.U. and fitters to the National Electrical Engineering Trade Union. But despite McCutcheon's skill in bringing about this tight closed shop, things began to go

wrong. Senior management at Ferenka decided that McCutcheon was not up to scratch and held him responsible for production and training problems. Dr. G.P. Munting summoned the personnel manager to his office and conveyed the decision: McCutcheon had to go. And so it was ironic that the supreme architect of the closed shop in the Limerick area found his own shop closed to him.

McCutcheon was sacked but the closed shop situation lingered on. At a time when Ferenka is crying out for fitters it is totally undemocratic and unjustified to exclude members of the Amalgamated Engineering Union (a long-established union in Limerick), from the factory. The A.E.U. has so far failed to pursue and publicise its claim for the employment of its members at Ferenka in a vigorous and militant manner. The time is now ripe for this union to enter into negotiations with the Ferenka management to break down the undemocratic barrier against its members.

It is only through the efforts of a united and class conscious working class that progress can be made towards securing a greater share of the wealth of industry and towards the eventual control of people over their own working lives. It is only when all Ferenka workers — tradesmen and production men — organise themselves together to work for this common goal (as their fellow workers in Holland have already shown), that real industrial democracy can be won.

## In the WORKHOUSE

The Hospital Ward — Time 1864

By J. F. O'DONNELL

Seven-and-sixty years to-day — seven-and-sixty years;  
And all the lilies, I know, are breaking white thro' the meres;—  
Lakes that shimmer and sleep in tremulous golden bars;  
Half the water is heaven, and all the lilies are stars.

All thro' the weary morn the minutes brought me reproof,  
I heard the swinging bell, and the lark's voice over the roof,  
I saw the dusky sun stream in thro' the parted doors:  
And heard the passing of feet in the ghastly corridors.

The master came and went, a smile on his grisly face,  
A nosegay fresh in his coat (Heaven a flower in this place!)  
He fumed, he jabbered, he puffed, moving between the stools,  
Raving, as I could guess, of regulations and rules.

A little thing was beside him, Sarah they call her here,  
I could see the round of her cheek — the tip of her pearly ear;  
Gaily she shook a world of curls, dancing them over her neck,  
She carried a slate and pen, and wrote at the master's beck.

Who and whence is Sarah? — Ah how my heart beats wild!  
Is she a pauper foundling, or is she that Sultan's child?  
Does she feed with the rabble, breaking the common bread  
On a plattered board, just two feet broad, the matron at the head?

Would that for your sake, Sarah, I had a mine of wealth,  
Would that for your sake, darling, God would bless me with health.  
Soon we would fly those dreary walls, leaving them far behind,  
For sunny fields where cowslips blow and the violets in the wind.

Little one, pass me nearer. Delicate workhouse Ruth,  
Dainty, beautiful presence, luminous spirit of youth!  
Breathe on me, tender being, whose folded wings are spanned  
With vulgar serge and horrible check, red with the work-house brand.

All thro' the weary morning, the lark sung over the roof,  
Swang the bell, and the minutes brought me bitter reproof.  
Why should I lie here, Sarah, sharing a pauper's dole,  
The Union stamped on my coverlid, the Union yoked to my soul?

Times, when passes the master, I crouch down, holding my breath —  
He looks so much like a landlord, and a landlord is so like death;  
Then I listen for noises, thinking with every sound —  
There, they're making a coffin to bury me down in the ground.

They tell me that I am sinking; you heard what the doctor said —  
"Hickey, lie still and be quiet, you know you're as good as dead".  
Suppose that I must die, Sarah, is this the place to fall —  
Is this the place where an honest man may turn his face to the wall?

Die, and stand in the dead-list as number seventy-five;  
That is my number, Sarah, as certain as you're alive,  
Should Nelly come for my bones, the clerk may say at the door,  
"Perhaps his number is seventy-five, perhaps 'tis seventy-four".

Only to think, while you and I are talking side by side!  
How the wonderful earth is glad and shinning outside.  
How groups are passing thro' sunny lanes, how the hawthorn tree is white,  
How dart the swallows from porch to ledge, a twitter to every flight!

Sarah, I'd give my eyes, poor as they are, for a look  
Down on a foamy glitter of one wild torrent brook;  
Sarah, I'd give my heart — darling, well may you smile;  
Just to look at our orchard trees over the garden stile.

For you must know when they left me, comfortless and forlorn,  
(Just the time when the poppy's fire was quenching in the corn,  
Came the summons to quit and go — licence to light the thatch,  
So, for the last, last time, I lifted the friendly latch.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

## Vocational Hazards

"Would you like to be a priest/nun/brother and help the Church with God's work"? Certainly almost all ex-pupils of the Irish Catholic school system have been on some occasion confronted by that question in the Church's drive for vocations. The schools have always been a recruiting grounds for the various religious orders. Naturally enough, any society wishing to encourage new members actively searched among the youth for its trainees.

The Irish Diocesan system drew its members from the landed and middle classes of society. It was said of the Tipperary farmer that his three ambitions were "to have a well in the yard, a bull in the field and a son in the diocese". Three perfectly valid ambitions, but the son and his counterparts brought with them in general to the Church an inevitable middle class and conservative view of society.

Contrast the attitude of Dr. Lucey (Irish Times May 15 '73): "The priest has no mission through ordination to be the parish welfare officer or social worker, much less to be the parish agitator or ombudsman ... the more a priest immerses himself in material concerns of parishioners the less a priest he is to them" with the attitude of an African missionary. "It's pointless for me trying to preach the gospel out there without first making sure that their bellies are full".

A vocation. That means only one thing — a call to the Religious life. This implication somehow be inferior. This suggestion, in the context of its presentation, often created a deep unease among young people idealistic enough to face a challenge but hesitant about the choice of this particular road. Hundreds resolved their unease by nervously accepting the suggestion — "Maybe God is calling you to-day". Many of those realised the mistake they had made and withdrew before suffering any ill effects.

Anybody can make a mistake but too late mistakes in the Religious life often had serious consequences. Religious life, because of its need for deep spiritual and mental commitment, damaged many of those who fell away too late. Many became social cripples — outcasts in a hypocritical and critical society. To-day attitudes have changed towards the seminary drop-outs. This may ease the pressure on them, but the unlucky individual will still bear the emotional scars and religious hang-ups.

In an era when it is admitted that there is a decline in vocations, a renewed drive for recruits is to be expected. However, now that the whole question of traditional methods of selection and training for the Religious life have recently been coming under severe scrutiny, many people will be surprised to discover that the Primary School System is still part of the same old recruiting area for vocations. "Unless you become as little children" sounds harmless enough, but praying and preying on the innocent idealism of eleven and twelve year olds is an insidious and irresponsible activity.

During the last Dail session the minimum age for marriage was raised by a few years. Expecting twelve year olds to commit themselves to a life-long occupation by ensnaring them into a college, convent or Juniorate, before their emotional development has had an opportunity to adjust itself to a world they will later be expected to live in, is a highly iniquitous mode of operating.

To continue to confront young, innocent, Primary School-children with the traumatic question: "Is God calling you to-day, my child?" is contrary to all educational and scientific laws. The sooner this reprehensible practice is ended, the sooner children will have a better chance of leading natural lives.

D 03906

by jim kemmy

# THE THOUGHTS OF PADDY DEVLIN

Since it was founded three years ago, the Social Democratic and Labour Party has functioned as the six-ring circus of Catholic nationalism. With a new ringmaster fronting the outfit every day of the week, the party has energetically bobbed to and fro on the tide of the Provisional I.R.A.'s campaign to subjugate the Northern Protestant community. The six M.P.'s who formed the party were mainly elected to the Stormont assembly on a civil rights ticket.

The S.D.L.P.'s declared policy on its foundation was one of working for democratic reform within the United Kingdom until such time as a majority in Northern Ireland opted in favour of joining with the Republic. But the party made little real efforts to operate as a democratic movement within the U.K. framework. As the Provo shooting and bombing campaign gathered pace, the party adopted an unashamedly anti-Partitionist position. Since then, the S.D.L.P. has skilfully exploited every kind of abstention and negative tactic in the shadow of the I.R.A. gunmen. Its politics has brought to a fine art that ambiguous and delicate relationship between constitutional and physical force nationalism.

Perhaps the most compromised politician in the S.D.L.P. is its chief whip, Paddy Devlin. A record of his career reads like the rake's progress through most of the political parties of Northern Ireland. In his time, Devlin has huffed and puffed his way in and out of the I.R.A., the Northern Ireland Communist Party, the Irish Labour Party and the Northern Ireland Labour Party before finally finding refuge, among his fellow Catholic nationalist refugees, in the S.D.L.P.

Like a beached fish, caught in the backwash of the Provos' spent campaign, Devlin faced the Northern Assembly elections. Confronted with the decision to remain stranded in the shallows or to move towards democratic politics and the prospect of a share in executive power, Devlin decided to swim for his political life.

But before the election, readers of the Helen Buckley "leisure page" of the Limerick (23rd June) were treated to a special interview with Devlin. The article titled, *Why the Devlins travel South*, answered this question in its opening paragraph:

*During one of those sporadic Irish weeks of brilliant sunshine, Paddy Devlin, who is facing the Northern Assembly elections on his S.D.L.P. ticket next week, was "recharging" his batteries for the fight in the clear air of the South while taking in the I.T.G.W.U. conference in Ballybunion. In his own words, he was attending the conference as an "observer" - the same way as Steve Coughlan. "I came to hear the debates, to get an idea of the problems the trade unions are confronted with. Then I go back and report to my party, and whatever particular legislation comes through I help influence it in a way that is helpful to the unions". But there was also, perhaps, some connection between his presence in Ballybunion at that particular time and the ensuing financial backing for his "assembly campaign" which it is rumoured, he received from the body.*

Unfortunately no details were given in the interview of the legislation and the unions mentioned by Devlin and the extent of the "financial backing ... received from the body" was also omitted. Questioned about the poor showing of the S.D.L.P. in the recent local elections, when the party received a mere 14% of the total vote, Devlin blandly replied:

*"What we wanted to do in the local elections was to get rid of the sectarian label which some people attached to us. Due to intensive polarisation since '69 you had as many as six S.D.L.P. M.P.'s representing constituencies where there were many Catholics, and thus the stigma attached to us".*

Not a word from Paddy about the Provo campaign which may have had some remote connection with the "intensive polarisation since '69". Describing the S.D.L.P.'s prospects in the assembly elections he again retreated into fantasy: "and the way is left open to us to get together with the people and run the assembly. The prospect is now open to us". Whether or not the Northern Protestant people and their political representatives are regarded as part of "the people" was not explained.

While Devlin's answers continued to be full of ambiguities and omissions as the interview went on,

his six-year old twins left no doubt where their political allegiance reposed:

*"Paddy Devlin has five children - the eldest, twenty one; the youngest six-year-old twins - who accompanied their parents to Ballybunion and amused themselves by brandishing mini Irish flags, one declaring himself a "Stickie" (Official I.R.A.) and the other a "Provo".*

The national question inevitably arose:

*On the issue of the Border, Paddy Devlin's stand, though on this occasion calmly stated, is one of the traditional Republican abolitionists, with the exception that he rules out violence. The Northern Ireland question he said, "will not be stabilised to any degree until the Border is settled. All the troubles have stemmed from the Border. I am not saying that I would use violence to get rid of it, but I want to persuade people to get rid of it. It serves no purpose. One government is like another. While he realised, said Paddy Devlin, that differences existed between "the two countries - no, the two parts of the country", he felt that to an extent that they were being bridged on both sides.*

That Paddy's logic is a little short of impeccable is shown by his earlier reference to the "intensive polarisation since '69". Undaunted by this obvious inconsistency, Devlin continued with more Catholic nationalist mythology, S.D.L.P. style:

*"Some anomalous gaps exist between the two parts of the country. There is a desire on the part of the Southern people to change the constitution and eliminate certain constitutional defects. As far as social services are concerned the E.E.C. will eliminate the discrepancies existing between both parts".*

The assertion about the effects of the E.E.C. entry is an interesting speculation, especially when one recalls that only less than a year ago Paddy Devlin toured Southern Ireland with his Official Sinn Fein friends strenuously urging voters to oppose E.E.C. entry. He even threatened to bring a Supreme Court case against the Southern Government, during the E.E.C. referendum

In the Workhouse.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Walked to the dusty road and turned with aching brows,  
There was a house-leek growing full on the eave of the house,  
There was a hole on the ivy, and the chimney against the sky;  
I tapped the tree on its knotted stem, and child-like whispered, "good-bye".

All the village gossips had heard of my doom and me;  
Some were curious, and some very sad, but let that be.  
Down I walked thro' the sunny street, thinking things might be worse,  
A branch of crab for a walking stick, and tenpence in my purse.

So here I lie in the workhouse, keeping despair at bay,  
Here I lie like a felon that waits yet fears the day,  
Sarah the doctor may be right (there's a fiend in his eye),  
And it may be, though I hope not, I shall have soon to die.

Tell me if Nelly's living, tell me if Michael's dead!  
What was that in the letter? Something of me was said;  
Send the priest to me, Sarah, there are rings in the air,  
Send the priest to me darling, I long for rest and prayer.



## HAMS ACROSS THE BORDER

campaign, on the grounds that by confining the referendum to the Republic the Lynch Government was depriving Northern Catholics and Protestants of the right to vote "No"! The fact that 83% of the voters in the Republic rejected Devlin's advice is now obviously of little consequence in the world of Catholic Nationalist mythology.

As the interview progressed, Paddy managed to further sink himself in a welter of self-deception and wishful thinking.

*"In the centre of Belfast businesses are losing a considerable amount of money. And it is clear that this does relate to violence. Business men have recognised this and are becoming more amenable to the idea of one undivided country ... Northern farmers are now buying land in the South. There is an orientation growing between the North and the South and the Northerners are finding that the South itself is not so bad. After all, if you lived there, you wouldn't have your wife taken away or your son shot ... Through this attitude both parts are drifting together!"*

Again, Devlin makes no attempt to support his speculation with fact and figures. But then, facts, figures and fantasy make a difficult combination. The picture presented by Devlin is a complete contradiction of the business and industrial life of Northern Ireland. William Whitelaw, H.M. Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, speaking, on 22nd January, in the Mansion House in London, gave the following details (*Irish Times*, 23/1/73):

*The record for industrial stability in Northern Ireland is second to none ... Whereas the number of days lost through industrial disputes in Great Britain for the first 10 months last year was 1,031 per thousand workers, the figure for the whole year in*

*Northern Ireland was 637 and just 80% of that figure is accounted for by one single industrial dispute.*

Whitelaw also pointed out that export sales had risen by 13% in 1971, and total trade by 10%. Two days after Devlin's interview appeared in the *Limerick Leader*, Sir Robin Kinahan, chairman of the Ulster Bank spoke in Limerick and gave further figures to refute the S.D.L.P. distortions (*Irish Times*, 26/6/73):

*He said that the upsurge in the economy of Britain had helped considerably and unemployment was down to just below 6%, which was the lowest figure for many years, and manufacturing capacity went up by 23 points over the past year ... Since the beginning the year, 24 factories were bombed but nearly all of them were back in business and the total number of jobs lost in the North due to bombing and burning was still only one thousand over the last 3½ years.*

Unburdened by these unpleasant statistics, Devlin modestly summed up his philosophy in life:

*"To look at things and their values in a simple direct way. The family tend to follow simple and tend to be honest. The children, for instance by example, from an early age, believe in trustfulness, honesty, compassion and generosity in everything they do".*

On the question of his political philosophy, Paddy's intellectual modesty again came to the fore:

*"My political philosophy is based on the christian ethic. It is not Marxist. I have read Marx and picked up certain elementary useful facts. Nevertheless, I think there is part of Marx which is not relevant to the present situation. I am interested in building a new society. The society I hope to live*

*in would be one where wealth and resources would be completely used for society's needs and not used for making profits for some people regardless of the rest ... I hope whatever we are doing will lead to peace in the North as quickly as possible, that permanent peace and prosperity will come to a long suffering and hard pressed people".*

Karl Marx also had some ideas about "building a new society" and wrote about these in his books. Unfortunately — like so many other matters in the interview — Devlin did not list the "certain elementary useful facts" picked up from his reading of Marx nor did he mention the "part of Marx which is not relevant to the present situation". And perhaps he thinks the capitalists will hand over their wealth and resources to the workers "for society's needs".

But by his this time even the patient interviewer had had enough. To emphasise the hypocrisy of Devlin's political philosophy and his professed belief in the virtues of "trustfulness, honesty, compassion and generosity", the last paragraph of the article stated:

*And while he was in Ballybunion, ... a man he feels no trepidation about in decrying in public, Dr. Conor Cruise O'Brien, was there ...*

So much for "honesty, compassion and generosity" when it comes to O'Brien and his attempts to reach a democratic position: on Northern Ireland. But the tide of events is rapidly running out for Paddy Devlin and the Slippery Six. When the workers in the two communities break free of nationalism and realise that two nations have evolved historically in Ireland and that both nations must be accorded the right to self-determination, only then will real unity be built.

D 08998



Seen at the presentation of the Tim Jones Perpetual Trophy to Eddie Lawless, President of the Sports and Social Club in the Gresham Hotel, Dublin, last month are (from left) John Bennett, chairman of the Soccer Committee; Frank Murphy, secretary of the Soccer Committee; Gerard Jones, director of the Jones Group; Michael Mullen, General Secretary ITGWU, and Eddie Lawless. The trophy is for a 5-a-side soccer competition and the first match will be on May 21 at Rutland Avenue.

## MISSIONS

(From: "Children of the Dead End" by Patrick MacGill.)

*I also looked upon the mission with disgust ... The Church allows a criminal commercial system to continue and wastes its time trying to save the souls of the victims of the system. Christianity preaches contentment to wage-slaves, and honours with the slave drivers; therefore the Church is a betrayer of the people. The Church soothes those who are robbed and never condemns the robber, who is usually a pillar of Christianity. To me the Church presents something unattainable, which, being out of harmony with my spiritual condition, jars rather than soothes. To me the industrial system is a great fraud, and the Church which does not condemn it is unfaithful and unjust to the working people. I detest missions, whether organized for the betterment of South Sea Islanders or unshaven navvies. A missionary canvasses the working classes for their souls just in the same manner as a town councillor canvasses them for their votes. I have heard of workers' missions, railway missions, navvies' missions, and missions to poor heathens, but I have never yet heard of missions for the uplifting of M.P.s, or for the betterment of stock exchange gamblers; and these people need saving grace a great deal more than the poor untutored working men. But it is in the nature of things that piety should preach to poverty on its shortcomings, and forget that even wealth may have sins of its own. Clergymen dine nowadays with the gamblers who rob the working classes; Christ used the lash on the gamblers in the Temple.*

## THE MONTH'S MIND

### KNACKERED

Limerick Gardai were today investigating the mysterious kidnapping of Cllr. Jack Bourke, who was last seen leaving the City Theatre on Thursday night holding tightly to a bag of money and a dishy blonde.

When Cllr. Bourke failed to show up at a Fianna Fail party meeting in Paddy Kiely's shop, the members adjourned to Dinny O'Malley's pub across the street where they debated for three hours the possibility that Jack could have defected to the National Coalition camp.

A quick phone call to Ald. Steve Coughlan left them in doubt that Cllr. Bourke would be accepted in the Labour Party. "We have certain standards we must maintain ... we can't open our ranks to Jack-come-lately", said Ald. Coughlan, "he must have integrity like me".

Sen. Ted Russell was equally insistent that the Fine Gael party would reject the application of Cllr. Bourke. "We need people of culture, who are refined and honest", said Sen. Russell, "people like Ald. Pat Kennedy, who is a perfect example of a modest, cultured and charitable young man".

After six hours the leader of the party Cllr. Rory Liddy decided to call in the Gardai as he feared that Cllr. Bourke could have been kidnapped in an attempt to prevent him from voting at the Mayoral Election.

The Mayor, Cllr. Kiely appeared on national television and issued an urgent appeal. "Jack, we need you", said the Mayor and then refused to utter another word.

Gardai carried out an intensive search of the Watergate area but any hint of scandal was quickly denied by a spokesman for City Theatre. "He was terribly interested in visiting the poor and deprived, and I know for a fact that he came down here to invite them to see "The Riordan's".

The Island Field command of the Official I.R.A. issued a statement saying that they were not involved in the mysterious disappearance of Cllr.

Bourke. "We feel that this is only a publicity stunt engineered by this man to get a theatre subsidy at the expense of the Irish people".

Cllr. Joe Quin also expressed regret at the "Jacknapping", as Gardai called it, and prayers were offered up in all city convents for the protection of his face and shoulders. The Variety Club wanted to call in Interpol but Mayor Kiely objected. "No ... the time isn't right for flowers yet", he said.

On Friday evening there was a dramatic entrance to Geary's Hotel, when the missing Councillor staggered in, tenderly holding his bag of money. He revealed that he had flown to the Continent to try to get Nora Russell to star in a new political musical named "Knackered" "She turned me down", complained Jack. "... a man of my experience. The cheek of her! She told me that as a Councillor I hadn't enough to offer!"

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